

# SIZE

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Most people want to owe “the Great Australian Dream”.

Most people wants to live in a Big House. Most want to live in a little house. How does size impact the life cycle of the people and their homes...

# STATISTICS

The following statistic is based on the year 2001 to 2026

## **INCREASE IN NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS...**

is going to increase by 39% to 47% with 10.2-10.8 million household in 2026. This growth is faster than Australia's projected population growth of 25% for the same period.

## **AVERAGE PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD SIZE...**

is declining.

It is currently around 2.6 people per household and is expecting to drop to 2.2 and 2.3 people per household in 2026.

this drop is projected to be smaller than New Zealand (2.6) and Japan (2.6).

## **Australian home size is growing**

A typical Australian house has changed from three bedrooms, one bathroom and separate living areas into a more open diversified plan. people are wanting a fourth bedroom and ensuite facilities which can be acted as a study room/ home office.

Rumpus rooms, walk-in wardrobes adds to the overall size of modern homes. This has resulted in an increase in the size of new residential buildings.

Living spaces have increased in size over the past 18 years.

# WHAT IS THE OBSESSION ALL ABOUT?

## Power

The analogy that the more there is, the better off it is  
Money

Eg. Why would national public buildings always larger?

## Status

Since the ancient time, people with status had a larger place. Eg. Chinese Palace in China, Beijing, which covered an area of 720 000 meters square.

Australia's culture is for quality to be assessed by size.

A way to show off to family and friends

## Want

A form of freedom and an accessories to own

## Great Australian Dream

If Australian wants to own a house, a pool, a large backyard and more, it obviously need the size

## Property market

The market wants a 3 - 4 bedroom house so we should create what is known to be in the market

## The need

For example, the need for a new baby on the way, kids out growing their rooms. The urge for new families with more requirements.

## Investment

People buying property as an asset. Renovate to make a profit. Developers are also setting a trend for having massive lands, but in actual fact, its easier for them to make more money

Above all, there are some places which doesn't offer the opportunity for bigger size, instead they are obsessed over the quality of the size they are given. Eg, inner city areas.

# IS BIG SPACES REQUIRED AND WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

## YES

- Houses which are generally bigger and generally further away from the city. To save travel time, the resident can stay at home more by having such items already at home
- The use of the home is different to other countries, such as Japan. We use our homes for living not just sleeping. Australians have the ownership of private space.

Individual privacy(not security privacy) allows individual activities to happen. I.e., Having private open space. A space for BBQs and gatherings

## IMPACTS

The urge for more, Excessiveness

E.g, the difference between a family room and a rumpus room

Land locations are very limited. The search for land meant that the city will keep spreading outwards

## NO

Some would say space is a necessity. It should be for Sleeping, eating and maintenance. Eg. Japanese

If the household sizes continue to spread, even in the city, there will be a sense of Claustrophobic.

*“ So much human effort and industry has been devoted to fulfilling these so called ‘basic needs’, that it now appears we no longer know what to repoid to first”* Craig Bremner, on people’s desire for ‘things’

People’s possession of ‘things’ have risen from 200 items one hundred years ago to rough 20 000 ‘things’ today. People are all a bunch of ‘greedy brats’ who wants as much as they have been exposed to. This not only includes on house sizes, but everyday objects. Hence, the need to have more space to store these objects.

The larger the house, the more ‘junk’ for people to obtain. Smaller houses in the inner city areas do not allow the opportunity for people to store places. Size of your house determines the items you are allow to buy.



# QUALITY OF CONSTRUCTION

Depending on the location of the site, and the allowable space for construction, some will put more detail in the level of construction while some put more detail in the size.

In the Inner City areas where the want of more physical space is an issue, people will put concentrate on the detail of construction, the level of design.

However, for areas where there are unlimited amount of land, people tend to throw all their money have a larger size house. the negative impact meant that the construction quality of the material is not as long lasting. This will lead to more frequent refurbishments and renovations

A fine examples are Project homes in the outer west,

They are like a parody between fast food and restaurants. Fast food are often premade, constructing the final stages in front of you while the restaurants are made to order and handled with care. That is why fast food (project homes) are cheaper to purchase, but with less positive outcomes.

In other words, clients have to decided between the quality of construction or the size of the construction. Unless they are the few Australian who can afford anything they desire. Location also determines the quality of your construction





My own house is a 5 year old single storey project home with typical features. I have noticed with the construction there are a lot of faults.

- 1.nail holes in the ceiling from where the carpenters put the plasterboard up.
- 2.water leakage under the eaves.
- 3.large windows facing West.
- 4.We have no backyard because the floor plate is too large for the site.
- 5.The house use to get very hot in summer and cold in winter. We now have a Ducted air conditioning, which is not energy efficient.

This is a prime example on how majority of people go for project homes int he outer sydney. Its affordability in comparasion to the size of the final building.

# ENERGY CONSUMPTION

The larger the house the more we consume. So it is to say that the large houses in the outer west consume more energy than ones in Glebe, Surry Hills Paddington etc?

Yes

There are more activities to be used (with the exception of architect designed) they are not designed according to the landscape. Therefore due to heating and cooling problems, more mechanical are to maintain the house from discomfort. There are more electrical items (televisions, lights) in the house to be used.

No,

As statistic suggested, there are less people per household. This means that less people in one house is using the same amount if there was twice the amount of people in that same space.

# THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN DREAM



## What is vision...

A Perfect family (mum, dad and 2 kids) living in a house that consist of:

- A big backyard, BBQ, Pool
- 4 Bedroom ( + ensuite)+ Study
- Family + Rumpus
- Dining room
- Open Plan Kitchen
- Double garage

and warm summer sun

What does it mean for Australian in terms of house sizes and house locations areas:

The spread of suburbs in order for client's desired house size. But the spreading of land use needs to be controlled and spreading of suburban areas comes with implications. If we look at suburbs like Kellyville, there are a lot of houses on large blocks. When closely examined, there are infact very low density due to the large area with little people living in each home.

Having lived so far away for the desired house size meant that you get your own privacy within your house. However, there are no sense of activities with neighbours and community.

Transport to the city will be a problem as there are not enough people talking them due to the density in the area.

*'Our Cities have historically expanded like a ripple from a drop of water hitting a pond, but this is about to change. Our cities now have edges and the ripple is about to rebound, creating a new layer of complexity. This layer, this densification, will exert pressure both physically and emotionally on the city and its people'-*  
Adam Haddow, Iron Architect-Jan, Feb AA

In here, Haddow is explaining how Australian cities are reaching there maximum size and are going to have to start become a lot denser. And becacuse of the Australian culture of taking for granted size and space, the city and the people are going to find this a very difficult shift.

## Do we really need to make these shifts?

*“Statistically speaking, our family sizes are shrinking, our life expectancy is longer and more of us live alone. This has disturbed the relationship within family structure, which become more organic. Our urban density levels are some of the smallest on the planet and our footprints some of the largest; we are living beyond our means”* - Adam Haddow, Iron Architect-Jan, Feb AA

## Why did it turned into that?

There are a number of reason as to why we desire the ‘Great Australian Dream’

From generations to generations, we have been known as living with out backyard. (BBQ and backyard Cricket). This is part of the australian culture value.

Real Estate often have “the Ideal Great Australian Dream” as their punch line in advertising bill boards and brochures.

People buy and sell these houses as a way of investment, as a well to persude the public into thinking this as the ideal home. Without letting them know the implications.

People have the urge for more, using the maximum of anything that is given to us. This problem is not just within suburban areas. Areas such as Surry Hills where land is limited, people are still building to the very boundry of each lot, minimizing outdoor spaces.

# PUBLIC SPACES

How are public spaces used in different house sizes?

In suburban areas public spaces barely get used. People use their backyards. Areas such as Standhope Gardens, people are living up to the Great Australian Dream houses with a backyard pool. However, they have a public pool near by. The public pool is not being used to its full potential due to the existing feature the house has have. This in terms also meant that more energy is being consume due to the numerous backyard pool as well as the public pool. Kids will not ultise public parks because they already have their own backyard.

The streetscape and public spaces therefore are very dead.

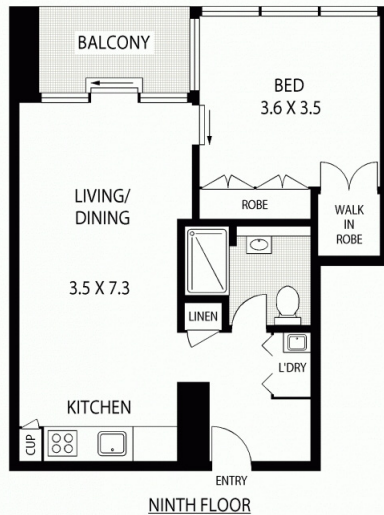
In a different sernario. When house sizes are limited with no large backyard. People will tend to use public amenity more often. There is social connection within the community. Less energy will be consumed due to shared usage.



The Boring, dead space of a too uniform residential community in Kellyville. There are lots of houses, but no one actually habiting the area.



# PROS AND CONS OF DIFFERENT SIZE HOUSES



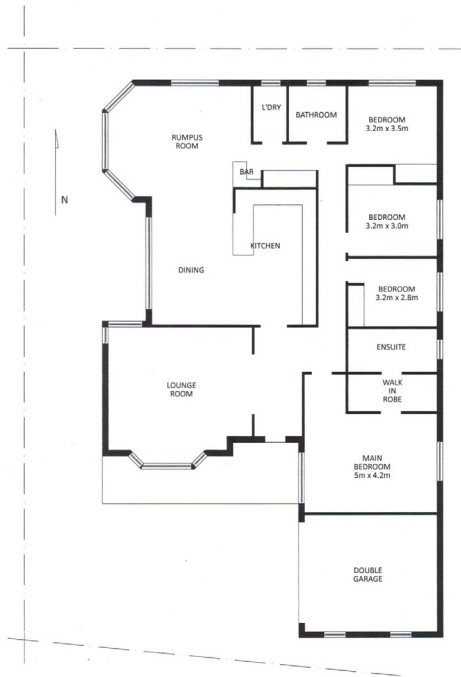
Pelican St, Surry Hills  
1 bedroom, 1 bathroom.

## Positive

- Walking distance to City
- Close to any type public transport
- Easy maintance
- Adaquate Energy Usage and material use-age

## Negative

- No Views, except other neighbour
- No parking
- Size of living and dining quite narrow
- House single person or couple
- Noise from main streets
- Crime within city, Alleyways
- No storeage space



Oliver St, Harbord

4 bedroom, 2 bathroom, double garage and a rumpus room

### Positive

House a whole family

Near the beach.

Double lock up garage

Good security and a sense of openness in neighborhood

### Negative

Very little Backyard with no grass only a small paved area

Poor spatial Planning

Hugh energy consumption (ducted Air con)

Always need to rely on car as a mode of transport

# COMPARISON

Criteria	1 Bed Inner city	4 Bed Outer city
Average Cost	\$600,000	\$900,000
No. of people	2 adults	3 adults
Distance from city	10min walking	45min drive
Cost to city	- \$2500/ year	\$ 50 / week \$ 25,000 for 10yrs
Floor area	60m2	180m2
Site area	-	220m2
Maintenance	\$ 50 / month \$600/year \$6,000for 10yrs	\$1000/year 10,000 for 10yrs
Air Conditioning (Energy Bill)	Initial cost \$1500	Initial cost \$6000
Gas & Electricity	\$150/quarter \$600/yr \$6,000for 10yrs	\$500/quarter \$2,000/yr \$20,000for 10yrs
Car Travel	2hrs/week 104hr/year 1,040hrs for 10yrs	5hrs/ week 260hrs/ year 2,600hrs for 10yrs
Average petrol consumption (Avg \$1.20/liter)	\$748.80/ year \$7,488 for 10yrs	\$1,872/ year \$18,720 for 10yrs
Amount of Furniture (\$1,000 per peice)	\$10,000	\$35,000
10 years Total	\$623,488	\$1,046,160
Per person over 10yrs	\$311,744	\$348,720

This exercise has shows that with the size of families decreasing the one bedroom unit will be more cost effective way of living over a long period of time. The amount of money and time spent travelling is quite ridiculous all just to have this extra space. And when you have this extra space it needs to be furnished costing more.

At the end of the table the price looks to even out

but in the case of the 4 bedroom house, contribution to the initial cost of the house or the energy bills was not included, which is the largest chunks. The house is too large for the amount of people.

A reserach has been done on other cities outside Australia. 3000 people were chose at random in Glasgow City. They were asked what they want to change with-in their house and what would they want if they were able to have anything.

To a suprise, no one wanted a bigger home but instead one third of the people wanted to make their existing house feel bigger.

Similiarly, during a trip overseas in Hong Kong, a city where house size is very limited,I asked several friends and family of mine to see if they were happy with the size and space of their apartment. To my suprise, for a society that is forced to live in small spaces, they do not. They replied saying they want a apartment which is enough because they have less to maintain.

This tells something about the Australian way of living. Australian always have had a egar for large houses, exclude the smaller apartment block in the inner city. We are all consumed into having large house, have excessive amount of funiture goods to which we physically do not require.

If Australians are to live in smaller, denser homes, we will always have the urge to live back in the suburban areas. It might become a fashion trend in which our desire in what type of housing we live in will change constantly. There will be an ebb and flow of the desire locations.

Houses in the inner city Sydney does not have the size of land they desire. However, they still use the maximim of what they have. Areas such as Surry Hills, Glebe etc... people tend to build to the full capacity of the land. The same problem in the outer west. A cuurent problem is that the people in large houses at the moment complain they are too far away from everything and therefore, they began that shift into the inner city. Once they are there, they then begin to complain how small the space is. They said there are no places to store goods and no place to relax, thought their homes are touching the boundary on all four sides. Evetually, they move back out into the suburban areas.

This is the ebb and flow of how Australia might get into.

Some good example Australian might want to consider looking includes...

Japan  
Hong Kong  
Korea

They all have very high densirty population within a limited amount of space.  
Case study is as follow:

# EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

As the Australian housing size will be a problem if we continue to create large excessive sized houses. Asian Country such as the Japan and Hong Kong is a very good starting point in looking at how people adapt in smaller size house as a starting point.

First of all, they don't have the opportunity to build large houses. Their house plan consists of all the necessary functions only. Such as Family Room, eating room, kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms. All these rooms are also interconnected so it utilizes every possible space.



Where do they store their 'things'. As mentioned before, with the big sized home in Australia, we tend to store 'things' in our house, in our store room, which leads us to having more time spent at home. In Hong Kong however, there is no such thing as a store room, every season people tend to replace with things. E.g. Fashion. people buy a new pair of shoes, even if it is not broken. There is just no space for them to store things. In terms of that, having to buy new things each season might mean that it is better for the economy.

People don't spend time at home, instead they are very social and have dinner in friends' places. This means that they are going to more places, not just staying at home and are in actual fact saving more energy. (As seen in the picture below)

Living in such dense area meant that they rely on their neighbour a lot, for security and social help( borrow equipments etc). Hong Kong is a very people based society where people heavily depend upon each other.



Comparing the Asian's way of life to the Australian. They have got to ask if they are ready to have a shift in people's relationship with each other and a change in educational views on what the "Great Australian" home should be all about.

The the excess size really a good alternate option if the city comes too far away?

# REFLECTIONS

It is a fact that Australian is obsessed with size. Australia has the land and space to build anything, but why is the society violating it? You can build a large house on a large land or a small house on a large land. Size shouldn't matter. When you got the land. However with the shocking statistics, Australia today needs to consider where the homes should be located and how big it should really be.

Although the Great Australian Dream is a strong concept in Australia, we all need to consider how these dreams apply in reality. Is it better off living closer to your neighbours by reducing the size of homes and intensifying its density, not away from the city, in the middle of nowhere? Maybe even subdividing your land in order to make money for yourselves and solving the land size crisis. Would the land that improve the future life cycle of building and people's quality of life?

Personally I think so, just because Australia gets to be what it was like decades ago. It was all about family, neighbours, transport etc

I understand the problem will remain where there will also be some people who still desire the Australian Dream. It is normal due to the obsession with size.

This all comes down to the way we have been brought up, been educated. We all want big houses because our parents had big houses. Therefore, we would want our kids to have a big house and a happy family. It is just a way to show off to your family and friends I believe.

To solve the problem with size, Australians should first of all rethink what is necessary and what is excessive and what is realistically required in a growing country.



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